

CEP 1119 Port Mellon,
British Columbia



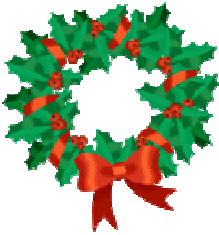
The Guardian

Christmas Edition

Volume 15, Issue 12

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Special points of interest:



Geez! The editorial is one big rambling story. Enough already!

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Keeping The Faith

By Roger Gaboury

I am winging this one as the printing deadline is in a few minutes. I had an editorial piece all ready to go but decided that this issue covered that news already. I am one of your elected wage delegates but I see that others have discussed the events as well as I could. So I will lecture on the subject of hope in the spirit of the season.

My favourite general meeting has to be the December one. A lot of the retirees show up and the whole event seems more like a party than a business meeting. If you listen carefully to the history those old warhorses cart around like badges of honour, you will conclude that they were fighting the good fight much as we are. They too, were threatened with strikes, and layoffs, and shut-downs. Yet they remained. They survived. And if their disposition and down-right great attitudes are the spoils of war, then bring it on. I want to end up like them. They seem to glow. (Some of you will say it's because they escaped.)

I hail from a family whose history is neck deep in fiber, so to speak. My grandfather was a blacksmith who swung hammer and handled tongs to shoe horses for the Abitibi Paper mill in Northern Ontario during the Great Depression. He died before I was born but my father told me tales of the shop. My

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From The Floor

Editorial

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grandfather kept the forge going night and day at great expense as wood had to be cut by hand or bartered in trade for smith work. For several years, that place was the only shelter available for the raft of drifters who rode the rails, desperately looking for work. The frigid climate of that part of the country was lethal so he bade one and all to use the place as a hostel. There was never a problem with tempers or manners as all appreciated the gift. Grandma always had a giant pot of burgoo simmering on the stove to feed the “guests of the colonies.” I never quite understood that saying and its too late to inquire now but it just seemed to fit the story. Anyhow, burgoo was a stew made up of all sorts of meats and leftovers and was kept cooking indefinitely. Only water was added at regular intervals to keep the stock in character.

Now I look at the situation we are faced with, a contract negotiation with a toughened agenda in a sunset industry (not my opinion, by the way) and I sure hope we are made of tougher things. We will do what must be done. We will bear what burdens are required with what I pray is a quiet dignity, or not. Our future will test us with different parameters than what my grandparents and parents endured. They strove to live while we worry about mortgages. They fed starving people while we whine about an increase in dues.

I am a relative newcomer to unions, to politics, and to writing. Through practise in all three, I find I trigger on phrases, on delivery, and on style. Brother Don Rheume, who often orates at meetings or while we discuss the many facets of our industry, once said “ People have to understand that contracts are not free. They are bought and paid for by the membership through strikes, strike support, and bargaining.” I am paraphrasing somewhat but the concept hit home. This contract negotiation process is a cost of being in the CEP.

This is our livelihood. Look at those neat presents under the tree. Look at the faces of your children or grandchildren. We are here because others stood together in times of crisis. Because brotherhood and solidarity are not mere words to slap at the end of an article as though membership in the executive required the motto. Your quality of life is a direct result of the fights those retirees fought for the last 40 years. Too bad many of you could not be there to say “Thanks.” Perhaps the 4 x 10 shift wore you out too much, or you were too weak from the lack of a meal after 10 hours to make the meeting. Or more likely, much like I used to be, you leave the business of running our union to the elected representatives. They know better. They understand that union stuff better than you. That’s why they took the job.

Please heed my words. Have a merry Xmas and a great holiday. And while you’re carving the roast beast and spooning out the stuffing, just imagine what serving burgoo would be like. Next year, plan to donate an hour of your time and attend the December meeting. Walk up to an old timer and say “Thanks.”

In solidarity.♦



Editor-In-Chief
Roger Gaboury

Your Newsletter Staff

Co-Editor
Dan Widsten



The President's Letter

By Allan Reid



With all the hustle and bustle that comes with Christmas activity, life at Port Mellon tends to follow a somewhat parallel path. Members are scrambling to get their time off and are scheduling time away to be with their families or friends. Trying to get a maximum number of people off at once increases the work load for the schedulers and also requires a further commitment from others to provide the coverage. The biggest challenge for all those involved is getting those working days off that fall between the Christmas and New Years Stats that still require coverage.

It is also a very busy time for the Local as well with the conclusion of the election for the 2008 Executive and shop steward elections underway. As the year comes to an end, we are starting off with a hectic month in January, with having to speed up the process of compiling all the wage delegates' surveys and have a special membership meeting to present the proposals for approval. The meeting dates of the Wage Caucus have been advanced to now take place from January 15 to 19 rather than in February and the surveys have to be in the Western Region office by January 10th. To add with the mix we have three arbitrations scheduled for a total of six days next month as well.

I'm sure that most of you have heard that Port Alberni Local 592 have broken the rules adopted by the Wage Caucus. They have negotiated on a Main wage Company Agenda without any involvement with our National Reps and against the rights of Caucus. Local 592 have voted on a new agreement with their employer and have employer's deal with a 58% acceptance vote. As there has to be consequences for both violating our CEP Constitution and rules that govern the Wage Caucus, the National Union has intervened

and is in the process of invoking the CEP Constitution under 12.03.01 to place CEP Local 592 under trusteeship. All of you should know that the employer put Port Alberni Local 592 between a rock and a hard place. But they did not follow protocol when the company had them against the wall; they did not call for help. What people must realize is when an employer puts a gun to your head, you don't help them out by holding the barrel. We must maintain solidarity and follow the rules that govern us and stay united, not fall prey to predator tactics of companies like Catalyst and be picked off one by one.

For a number of years, we have questioned what happens with the Eastern Pulp and Paper Sector style and process of bargaining and how much does that differ from the West. The Caucus has agreed to explore the possibilities of entertaining a bargaining structure that could involve both east and west strategies. The National Union is presently undertaking setting up a meeting to have the Western Wage Caucus meet with our counterparts back east in Montreal in February. A lot of what is happening in the Pulp & Paper and Forestry Sectors in this country needs to be addressed from a national perspective. The possibilities to have discussions that should formulate a coordinated bargaining strategy with the east and the west are behind this initiative.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the new members to the 2008 Executive and the others staying on in the same or new positions. I would also especially like to thank those members

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who will not be on the executive this coming year for all their hard work time and effort served in their positions and numerous years on the Executive. I look forward to working with you in other capacities and committees and have every confidence that, as we move into the New Year, we can beat the challenges we face ahead as we work together.

Finally I would like to thank this Local for entrusting me the responsibility of being President for a second term of office. You have my word that I will do my best to serve this Membership and this Union to the best of my abilities.

Please stay tuned for meeting notices to take place in the first week of the New Year and have Safe and Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.♦

A Big Thank You



I attended the Xmas dance and social on Friday November 30th and thought it was a great party. The food, the music, the dancing, the prizes, and the friendship – it was superb. I offer a big thank you to Janice and Donna for taking care of everything

again this year. Hope we can have as much fun next year.

I would like to congratulate all those who have let their name stand for an Executive position for 2008 and thank those who have served on the executive this past year.

See you at the General meeting and social on December 18th.

Gerry Sauve
Recording Secretary
CEP Local 1119

CEP Annual Christmas Dinner and Dance

It was a great fun group that enjoyed the CEP dinner and dance held Nov 30th at the Roberts Creek Golf and Country Club. The clubhouse was decorated in holiday style and the buffet was excellent. After dinner we danced the night away!

We'd like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a safe and happy holiday.

Janice McFarland and Donna Bullock

It's a Millwrightesse

Andy & Deb Kutvonen welcome their daughter, Abigail, born on Tues. Dec. 18th at Lions Gate Hospital, weighing 5 lbs. 4 oz. She arrived 5 weeks early – everyone doing well.



Traditions: Christmas Trees and Ornaments

From the internet

The fir tree has a long association with Christianity, it began in Germany almost 1,000 years ago when St Boniface, who converted the German people to Christianity, was said to have come across a group of pagans worshipping an oak tree. In anger, St Boniface is said to have cut down the oak tree and to his amazement a young fir tree sprung up from the roots of the oak tree. St Boniface took this as a sign of the Christian faith. But it was not until the 16th century that fir trees were brought indoors at Christmas time.♦

Wage Caucus

In my last article, I said that I would reserve comment on the local 592 "affair", until I had heard from them personally. Well caucus did, and without divulging the proceeds of the caucus meeting, it's safe to say they are no longer with us for this round of bargaining.

Some people have asked me "does this bad deal set the pattern for the industry?", to which I've replied "only if we let it" — it's our choice. Your wage delegates are moving forward to develop "OUR" agenda to present at the next round of bargaining in May. This deal, or the Port Alice deal, or any other deal, will not change our course. "WE" will set our agenda — not Ron Buckhorn from Catalyst. Your delegates will be meeting soon to correlate the surveys you sent in on local and main wage item's and should have an agenda to present to the western region soon after.

I have not talked to anyone at our mill who is interested in reversing 50 years of hard fought collective bargaining. Any changes we make must make sense for everyone. Labour cost is only one factor in this mess we call the forest industry. Cecil Makowski, V.P. from Ontario, spoke about the need to lobby governments of all stripes to invest in R&D for the forest industry because if you are not making the right product for the right market, you could work for free and your mill still won't survive.

Cecil also reported on the up coming eastern bargain and he extended an invitation from the eastern caucus for us to join their next wage caucus in order to explore the idea of a coordinated bargaining strategy. This idea may make us stronger as we deal with a ownership structure that continues to consolidate (there are 8 main company's world wide that control our industry). This won't mean we'll bargain together, but there could be a coordinated bargain on key issues. It will be for the membership to debate at a future time.

Right now there is a task force set up with the

CEP and the PPWC with some of the industry trying to get "GORDOE" off his BUTT to address the crisis unfolding in the B.C. forest industry, the NDP is on board and your union working hard to save this industry. We need a fibre supply, an industry that will reinvest, and a government that will provide incentives for R&D so our industry has a future. And we need it now!

I would like to thank Bruce McClymont for letting his name stand for area rep of the chip line and I know he's looking forward to it. As 1st Vice President, I hope to get the area rep's and shop's together early in the new year.

I wish you all a happy holiday,
in solidarity,
Don Rheume

New Year for the Executive

The Best of the Season and a Happy New Year to all!

I wish to extend my thanks to all those who voted for me in the recent election. I look forward to the year in my new role as financial secretary.

Also, I extend a warm welcome to all the new executive members. I anticipate a successful year of working together. I expect that it will be an "interesting" year to come, what with negotiations and the current condition of the industry, but I believe that the executive group is ready to take it on. Viva solidarity!

In solidarity,
Gert Leslie



HAPPY NEW YEAR!!

From your editors — Roger and Dan

(Continued on page 6)

Dear Brothers and Sisters

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the local for sending me to the B.C Provincial Council conference in Vancouver last November 23,24, and 25.

I had the privilege of hearing speakers like Seth Klein from the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA) who spoke on poverty in British Columbia. Seth not only recognizes it exists but has a vision that it should be a thing of the past. It was refreshing to hear (what could be) solutions rather than just complaints that are not being dealt with – solutions that make sense and within our abilities as British Columbians. This government has the resources but refuses to use them to better the lives of the sick and homeless.

Seth also spoke on the Trade, Investment and Labour Mobility Agreement (TILMA). This was even more amazing for me to think that, in April 2006, without public consultation or legislative debate, the premiers of Alberta and British Columbia signed the TILMA inter-provincial free trade pact This was an amazing political accomplishment and is bad news for all Canadians and needs to be stopped before it is made law. There is now a transition period of two years ending in April 2009 (really not giving us much time). I am encouraging all our members to read up on this issue and tell our local councilors and legislators we do not want to be involved in this kind of agreement.

There were many speakers from other CEP locals with the same concerns we have here at HSPP. Job security, long term concerns for our industry, and the way that most management regimes seem to insist on abusing our resource based industry. How can we allow one in three logs to be sent across the line or left in the bush to rot? Is the new Provincial Forest Policy regarding the pine beetle kill really the way to deal with it or are we wasting more wood than need be? The question should be, wood waste or wood wasted?

We need to utilize what we get from the forest more efficiently and reduce the waste. We need to stop shipping raw logs (our jobs) across the line and protect the resource that is ours as British Columbians. We need to be heard, contact your local representatives and give them the

message "Our Province is not for sale".

In Solidarity
Bruce McNevin

Bugged by the Buzz

One has to wonder what the mill has come to. Now we have a buzzer to tell us when to stop for coffee and lunch and when to start work again. We have gone for 15 years that I've been there with no problem. So now do I wait to for the bell to start work? Do I have to ask for permission to go to the washroom? Do I need a hall pass to go the mill stores? Are we going to having crossing guards?

Yes I have to wonder where the priorities lie when I walk through the world class maintenance shop. There is equipment waiting to be repaired scattered all over the floor. There are lights burnt out in the parking lot that need to be replaced. I'm still working out a rollaway which I was given to make room for the new shop. But no, it is far more important to have the buzzer installed. Yes I have seen the light or lack of.



Blair Hunter

The BC Fed

Dear Brothers and Sisters,
I was recently chosen to attend the B.C. Federation of Labour's annual convention with Andrew Appleton. This Convention assembles every legitimate union in B.C., so the reports and resolutions concern both the private and public employees. A few recent resolutions dealt with universal day care, raising the minimum wage, increased protection for employees working alone, and the ongoing struggles to resist the privatization of health care, B.C. Hydro and B.C. Rail. The one piece of legislation

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which almost made it was the anti scab legislation (too bad).

One of the issues of sending a member of our union to the B.C. Fed is the cost. There are convincing arguments on both sides of the coin. One side says the local doesn't get enough benefit for their money; there are too much public union issues there, and so on. I would like to give the membership a method to recoup their money exponentially.

The two issues on the privatizing of our health care and Our B.C. Hydro if implemented will hit us hard in the pocket book. We have all seen the initial effects of the privatized health care with the longer waits and options to speed up the process with a fat wallet. What a lot of people don't realize is that, in many cases, the same doctor which can't perform surgery on you for ten months will be the same doctor which allows their services to be scheduled on the off hours to perform the surgery within the week for the right price! Two tiered health care is criminal!

The other privatization of our resources comes at us with the sale of tenures on rivers for private power plants. B.C. Hydro has actually been forbidden to develop any new power production facilities with only private companies establishing new power plants and virtually giving away our valuable resources. In places where this has already been implemented, the costs have doubled or tripled after the time period for set costs is over. If you think electricity is expensive now, just wait until we have to pay private companies to warm our houses! At least the costs of running publicly owned power facilities go to maintaining the facilities, paying public employees, and funding the government.

So what can you do you ask? Well you can become one of the vocal unionists who care about your future and are willing to make a change for the better! To add your support to these two important causes try these web sites.

<http://www.publicpowerbc.ca/>

<http://www.bchealthcoalition.ca/content/view/1/82/>

Dave Strom,
Chief Shop Steward.

From the Internet

Santa Claus, like all pilots, gets regular visits from the Federal Aviation Administration, and the FAA examiner arrived last week for the pre-Christmas flight check.

In preparation, Santa had the elves wash the sled and bathe all the reindeer. Santa got his logbook out and made sure all his paperwork was in order. He knew they would examine all his equipment and truly put Santa's flying skills to the test. The examiner walked slowly around the sled. He checked the reindeer harnesses, the landing gear, and even Rudolph's nose. He painstakingly reviewed Santa's weight and balance calculations for sled's enormous payload. Finally, they were ready for the check ride.

Santa got in and fastened his seat belt and shoulder harness and checked the compass. Then the examiner hopped in carrying, to Santa's surprise, a shotgun. "What's that for!?" asked Santa incredulously. The examiner winked and said, "I'm not supposed to tell you this ahead of time," as he leaned over to whisper in Santa's ear, "but you're gonna lose an engine on takeoff."



Health & Welfare Report

— Gert Leslie

We finally received termination accounting figures from Manulife and the Union share (30%) of the surplus generated from WI and LTD is about \$62,000.



Mercer's, the company's benefit plan consultant, met with the committee to present these figures and to discuss the "go forward" position with Sunlife.

Our plan experience with Sunlife is showing an increase, especially in LTD. We currently have eighteen members receiving LTD benefits, which is up from around twelve that has been the average over the past five or six years. Sunlife is suggesting a 30% increase on premiums, but that is far from decided because it is under negotiation and Mercers say that around 10% would be more realistic due to the short term that Sunlife is basing the experience on.

We are still finalizing what to do with the refund amount from Manulife. Our Collective Agreement says "surplus accumulations, if any, will be used only for the purpose of reducing premium costs." (Exhibit C – Welfare Plan, Item #10) Our recommendation from the committee is to apply the amount directly to premiums over the course of the upcoming contract year. This would provide a small monthly savings for everyone as well as effectively negate any increase. With luck, at the end of another year the increase could even be reversed.

As an item of interest, the biggest proposed premium increase is with the dental plan, which is 100% employer paid per our Collective Agreement. The increase there is likely to exceed the LTD increase substantially. And we'll be at the negotiating table in a year!



Keep the tree watered!!!

Don't be a member of the stooi-doop club. (If you remember this club, you are at least 50 years old) TV ad circa 1964.

Accommodation Tip

The direction of the current caselaw is that the employer is entitled to request, and receive, an adequate diagnosis from the employee's physician concerning his or her fitness. Otherwise, it is not in a position to adequately

It's YOUR Right!

The duty to accommodate requires more from the employer than simply investigating whether any existing job might be suitable for a disabled employee. Rather, the law requires an employer to determine whether existing positions can be adjusted, adapted or modified for the employee, or whether there are other positions in the workplace that might be suitable for the employee.

The Supreme Court of Canada has said that collective agreement provisions are to be respected, but they may on occasion have to be waived if they unreasonably block a viable accommodation option. Displacement of an incumbent employee to accommodate a disabled employee has been widely viewed as undue hardship.



Words From the Chief

(Pic in next edition-Ed)

Initially, I was going to start this letter with tidings of great joy but besides the fact the mill continues to run and we still have a job, I find my union activities are filled with conflict.

The Company continues to keep the elected union officials quite busy. Some of the recent issues are: challenging the accommodation law, changing the way floaters and union leave are granted, squeezing the 4, 10's shift schedule for all it's worth, resisting seniority and bumping rights during layoffs, and reducing our labour force while not reducing contracting out.

We have had discussions and grievances on a lot of these issues. We have grievance in various stages of progress even some up to arbitration. It seems the front line supervision has not the knowledge or autonomy to deal with contractual issues and thus a simple fix ends up at standing committee or higher. The need for training on our contract for front line supervision is quite evident. I'm not sure whether it's upper management's specific intent to limit the front line supervision's ability to deal with issues or they just live in fear of making a mistake.

Recently, I attended the wage caucus in Vancouver where we discussed solidarity amongst the caucus, the possibility of a coordinated national bargaining strategy, setting the itinerary and discussing the trigger bonus ramifications. Overall we are moving forward in a timely manner with the diversely financially affected locals.

I would like to wish everyone the happiest of holidays and best wishes to friends and family.

Dave Strom,
Chief Shop Steward.

Wage Caucus Agenda is put on hold

From the PPWC

SINCE LAST MAY the Pulp, Paper and Woodworkers of Canada wage caucus has tried to put forward the idea of early bargaining. An agenda was composed and a few companies around the province were asked to sit and negotiate from that agenda, but no one was willing to participate.

We thought it would be an opportunity to work with the employer without pressure on either side, but just a chance to sit and come up with something that would work for all parties.

We have now decided that an early bargain is not possible with the end of the current collective agreement approaching quickly. The locals at wage caucus have decided to put bargaining off until spring. We have decided that if any company approaches a local to bargain, that they be directed to the National office for particulars and then the wage caucus would decide on the appropriate action to take.

This may be a tough bargain, with some companies already digging in and saying they will not increase their costs, while others look for roll-backs.

This is an interesting position, considering United Steelworkers just settled for wage increases in an industry that continues to lose cash, and workers to the north are making big strides in their wage packages.

It may be time for us to tighten our belts and start saving money for this set of negotiations. It may take the discipline and solidarity of the entire PPWC wage caucus locals to get to a fair and equitable settlement.

JIM KING, PRESIDENT

2007 BCFL Convention Delegates Report

The BC Federation of Labour had their annual convention in November. Dave Strom and I were the delegates for our local. I was asked by one of our members why it's good for our local to send a delegation to the convention, and I'm sure there are more members who wonder the same thing. I agree that the membership should know what goes on there, and why we invest in sending people to events like this.

Numerous topics from many different sectors were discussed, but a few stories and events stood out.

There was a guest speaker, who is the President of the Miners and Ironworkers Union in Mexico, representing about 150,000 members. (His name escapes me at the moment.) He has spent the last 2 years living in Vancouver, exiled from his native Mexico. There was a catastrophic accident at one of the mines killing 60 workers, and stranding 60 more workers trapped in the rubble. The company didn't bother to try and save the trapped survivors, and left them there to die.

The Union President charged the company with forging documents and corruption, but in turn was told by the government of Mexico to leave the country or risk your life. So he has been running his union from Vancouver, using satellite video and emails. With the help of the USW and other unions, he has since won his court case and has been exonerated by the Mexican Government. A real example of international solidarity!

We also participated in a rally outside the Sears building on Robson Street. It was in support of our brothers and sisters who are locked out by Sears. Please remember to tell friends and relatives to not shop at Sears this year until the company can come to a fair agreement with their workers.

In the end, I learned a lot about what's happening with other industries and unions. That's one of the benefits to sending a delegation — you can make connections and gain different perspectives on a complete cross-section of the workforce.

Also, I would like to thank the local for helping to fund the kids Christmas party this year. It was

a good time, aside from trying to keep D. Widsten out of the bouncy castle.

Merry Christmas!
Andrew Appleton

(The following letter refers to a meeting that was held with the maintenance workforce (not all of them) in the lunchroom a few weeks ago regarding the 4 x 10 labour issues. Edited for content as per our guidelines—Editor)

Open Letter about 4 x 10s

I have been speaking with several people concerning 10 Hr. shifts and their feelings about it. A large percentage of the guys in my locker room and also at the Maintenance lunchroom [as evidenced this afternoon], are not happy with these shifts and lack of benefits as they now stand!

You asked that we write our concerns down so here goes:

1. The longer hours do not benefit our ability to engage effectively in after-work activities of all kinds because of:

- a.) Scheduling conflicts
- b.) Time consideration
- c.) Increased fatigue

I personally am finding it much more difficult, or impossible to do a work out routine that I have before now been doing successfully after work for years because of those factors.

2. Lack of proper cleanup time!
3. The so called benefit of having an Extra Day Off is not really panning out that way for me and many others.

a.) Because of the 10 hr. shifts, various appointments once do able after work must be scheduled for our Extra Day Off!

b.) I myself and others have found that the first day off [Fri.] has been rather unproductive much as the shift workers first day off!

4. It is reprehensible that Union Tradesman would even consider working 12 hr. shifts without a proper cleanup and Hot Meal provision in a timely fashion!

5. Finally, given the fact that a very large per-

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centage of us Tradesman and others affected are unhappy with the 4/10 'Package' we should revisit and review our voting process concerning the 10 Hr. shifts.

While it seems reasonable, and in fact prudent, that all Union members had the opportunity to vote concerning the 10 Hr. shifts proposal, most of our Union

Members remain directly unaffected as their schedules have not changed. Because of this fact, we should [at the very least] reconsider tallying only the votes of those actually scheduled on the 4/10's.

Thank you for suggesting the opportunity to express our views in 'black and white' [written form!]

Brother Bob, O. H. Dunn

Mill Workers Deeply Troubled – NDP

PRINCE GEORGE – New Democrats are calling on the Campbell government to stop observing and start taking action as increasing numbers of workers are hit hard by mill closures at various sawmills in the Prince George region.

"More than 200 people are expected to lose their jobs when Canfor comes through with its planned cuts to the Polar, Rustad and Clear Lake saw mills at the end of the month," New Democrat forestry critic Bob Simpson said today after meeting with workers and union representatives.

"The best thing we can do right now is work together and come up with constructive solutions."

Simpson noted that Leader Carole James' and the New Democrats call for an emergency summit on the state of the forest industry is gaining support. At today's meeting the Communications Energy and Pulp workers union added their support for an emergency roundtable

"CEP is trying to find ways to keep people work-

ing following the shutdown of several Abitibi Bowater's mills, including operations in Mackenzie which will cost the community 700 jobs," said Simpson.

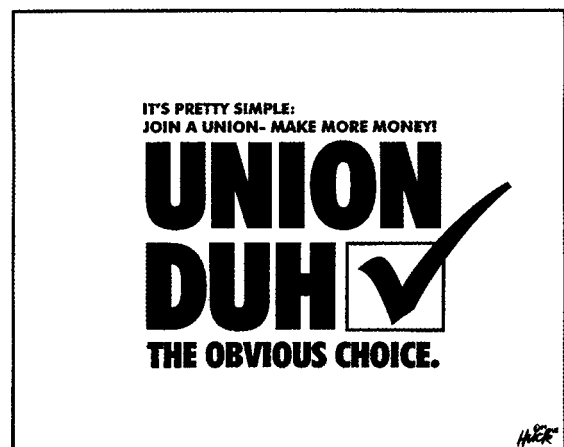
The New Democrats have targeted ways to mitigate the immediate impact of the mill closures by calling on an automatic mill closure review process and a community and worker adjustment program.

"Since May of this year, 1800 direct jobs have been lost in the Central Interior forest industry and Forests Minister Rich Coleman has repeatedly said that there's nothing he can do to help.

"The Minister should be here today. He has an obligation to these people who are looking for leadership on this issue," said Simpson. "It's not acceptable for the Campbell government to sit on the sidelines as workers and communities suffer.

"If the Minister is not willing to sit down with us and come up with ways to ensure the viability of the most important industry in this province, perhaps it's time for the Premier to find a Minister who will."

It is estimated that B.C. has lost a total of 3100 direct mill jobs and hundreds more indirect jobs in the forest industry this year.♦





Safety: An Ongoing Concern

By Andy Kutvonen

Seasons Greeting!!!

It's that time of the year, brothers and sisters, the last guardian of the year. The festive season is upon us – time to reflect upon the events of the past year and consider the mix of positive and negative.

The loss of our co-workers this year is a heartfelt negative to all. Another negative of the year, mixed with a positive, were the layoffs some of us experienced. A negative due to the disruption and financial loss many faced; a positive due to the fact we were able to weather the storm without an increase in injuries.

The past year was full of change, some visible, some hidden, and many still in the process of unfolding. Some visible changes included the face of IHSC. As a fellow committee member, I would like to thank Krista Cantarutti, Tracy Duffy, and Aaron Reid for their tireless efforts. To the new members, Dave Beauchesne, Corrinne Powers, and Adam Todd – welcome aboard and to some, welcome back.

A less obvious change has been the agenda set back in 2006. At that time, IHSC agreed to avoid the flavor of the month and attempt to tackle or implement some programs we felt needed attention. We are maintaining the course and will hopefully complete and implement the indicated items. These include Job Hazard Analysis (JHA's), Task Hazard Analysis (THA's), and a continuation of the training and implementation of root cause analysis.

It would be a lie to say the root cause program was implemented without trouble. Since inception, there has been a steep learning curve. Thankfully, I believe we have rounded the corner and the root cause analysis (RCA's) investigations have become second nature to many in-

volved.

As a committee, we have agreed to focus our energy on completing any outstanding items from 2007 in the first half of 2008, thus leaving a healthy margin for any new business that may need our time and resources.

One cannot predict the events of the coming year. I can only hope that each and everyone, upon completion of their work day, returns to their family in the same, if not better condition from when they left.

I look forward to serving the membership.

Have a safe and happy holiday season.

Andy Kutvonen

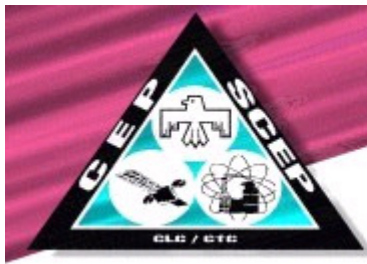
Yes Deer

a) Reindeer's Story at Christmas

According to the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, while both male and female reindeer grow antlers in the summer each year, male reindeer drop their antlers at the beginning of winter, usually late November to mid-December.

Female reindeer retain their antlers till after they give birth in the spring. Therefore, according to EVERY historical rendition depicting Santa's reindeer, EVERY single one of them, from Rudolph to Blitzen, had to be a girl.

We should have known... ONLY women would be able to drag a fat man in a red velvet suit all around the world in one night and not get lost.



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More Christmas Memories

By Roger Gaboury

A bitter cold crept down from the far North, its icy tentacles threatening any exposed skin. That kind of arctic air froze nose hairs and caused your breath to ice up your eyelashes. Even hell had to turn up the gas that day. I knew the old man was too comfortable to leave the warmth of the house when I heard Mom hint that it was time to get the tree. He shivered by the frosty window, searching for a way out, in order to stay in. "But the weather's bad; wind's from the North," he said. This was true. However, the wind always came in from that direction for 8 months of the year and so he garnered little sympathy from the boss. Then I saw him looking at me as though he was sizing me up for something – the same way he looked at turkeys in the Co-op freezer at Thanksgiving.

Oh, he sure started friendly enough, describing the job with colourful adjectives and hanging compliments on us like cheap garlands, calling us "wee men" and "pint sized lumberjacks". We knew we were being buttered up and stuffed. He bribed us with a fortune in quarters, willing to go as high as fifty cents apiece to cover the labour for a grade "A" tree. In hindsight, we should have gone for a legal opinion of the contract or at least garnered some clarification of the grading system but I trusted him. My brother however, insisted on cash in advance.

The old man handed me the axe: said this was another step in my evolution towards manhood – the wielding of sharp tools. Since I was only 11 years old, the instructions were specific: don't cut yourselves. He stated that gem with great sincerity and emphasized its importance by pausing slightly after each word as though I harboured a secret longing for self-mutilation. Or maybe he knew about my lack of coordination in all things athletic and the warning was more for the safeguard of my younger brother. To stress his point, he threw in some unavoidable stories of his childhood, describing the atrocities committed by his



schoolmates with the business end of a hatchet. So many fingers and hands were chopped off in that one tale that I wondered how anyone of his generation could have ever held a pencil. He expanded on his original tree order without additional offer of compensation – "Get a good one and two spares."

Mom packed us a thermos of hot chocolate and some ham sandwiches as we donned jeans over long johns and sweaters under parkas. We kept the sandwiches in breast pockets nearest the skin as the -30 C weather would freeze them solid otherwise. Toques, scarves, and moose hide mitts completed the attire. The mitts had a nose-wipe strip on the outer shell— a feature that Northerners took for granted but Southerners failed to appreciate.

Once we left the safety of the warm house, it was akin to walking on a strange planet. No one was about. Few sounds were heard and those were amplified in the thick air. Raven hung about the chimney flues warming their feathers in the exhaust and cracking the sky with their hoarse croaks. The snow squeaked under our skidoo boots. My breathing hissed. The toboggan groaned in protest as we hauled it towards the railway track a block from the house. Cisco field waited on the other side. Dad had told us to limit our safari to a property ¼ mile further up but we modified the order once in the field, figuring that he wouldn't know the difference between Cisco trees and the other place.

We hunted for our prey by snowshoe across the length and breadth of the tree line bordering the 80 or so acres. These strips of windbreak forest consisted mostly of aspen, tag alders, stunted balsams, and frozen black spruce that creaked and cracked without the aid of a breeze. Few specimens stood above 5 feet. We still managed to our credit to capture a seven footer and two "spare parts" trees without loss of fingers, the severing of hands, or the bludgeoning of each

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other with wildly aimed swings of the axe in close proximity. We sat and lunched in the brambles prior to the trek back home and praised each other on our hunting skills as though tree cutting somehow had involved stalking.

When we stumbled into the kitchen in a numb state, Dad came rushing in to inquire as to our health.

"What kind of trees did you get?" he asked. The question was lost on us because we only new of two species of trees — deciduous and Xmas.

He trimmed the butt of the best of the bunch with the saw and stuffed the victim into our vintage tree holder. Since I had seen too many fire safety films, I quickly filled the pot with water as though the tree would self-ignite if its thirst wasn't slaked immediately. Once the emblem of the holiday was safely positioned in the corner, Dad took out the Xmas drill and bore holes into the trunk. He then cut branches off of the "spare parts" trees, sharpened the ends, and then jammed them into the drill holes. Thus, our tree now wore plugs in its sparse areas even though the recipient was a spruce and the donor, a pine. The hybrid looked quite dapper once the lights and decorations were placed with Mom supervising the laying of tinsel for artistic balance.

Dad finished the job by placing the golden star at the peak of the tree. Praises were given for a job well done with the tree hunting division receiving special commendation for bravery in the form of an additional quarter each (at Mom's prompting). We were deep into cookies and hot chocolate when the commander debriefed us.

"Where is the axe?" he said. I looked at my brother and he hung his head.

"I guess we must have left it in the bush."

"Where the packsack with my new thermos?"

"Safe with the axe, I guess," I answered, staring into my cup.

I reasoned that the bloodlust we experienced

from felling our first trees had driven common sense from our heads. Now that night had fallen, Mom forbade us to go out to look for the wayward items. In the end, Dad had to venture out to find the gear by flashlight so he ended up in the cold anyways. We had to confess where we had scored the shrubbery and he grunted his disapproval. He ran into old man Cisco that night who also grunted his disapproval so Dad had to post-purchase the scrubby trees to retrieve the gear.

He spent the rest of the holidays deep in rum and eggnog, muttering about the costs of Christmas, and vowing he would get the tree next year and cut those little buggers out of the deal. I believe "buggers" was not the term used but it is close enough for print.

I have been blessed with a great childhood and those Christmases reside in my memory as soothing as a crackling fireplace on a stormy night. I believe that I am not like my father in many ways. But when a voice beckons in December to ask the dreaded tree question, I leave my warm couch to gaze out the window and say "But the weather's bad; wind's from the North."♦

A Groaner

An industrious turkey farmer was always experimenting with breeding to perfect a better turkey. His family was fond of the leg portion for dinner and there were never enough legs for everyone. After many frustrating attempts, the farmer was relating the results of his efforts to his friends at the general store get together.'

Well I finally did it! I bred a turkey that has 6 legs!

They all asked the farmer how it tasted. 'I don't know, 'said the farmer, 'I never could catch it!'

Christmas in Africa



Preparation for Christmas in the Congo begins when some group is designated to prepare the annual Christmas pageant.

Christmas day begins with groups of carolers walking to and fro

through the village, along the roadway, by the houses of the missionaries, singing the lovely carols known the world around. Often people may be awakened by a group of carolers beginning to converge on the house of worship. They return home to make final preparation as to the clothes one must wear and also as to his offering for the Christmas service.

The most important part of their Christmas worship service is the love offering, this is the gift in honor of Jesus. Then at about 8 or 9 o'clock everyone makes their way to the celebration of the birthday of Jesus.

Everyone who attends the service goes forward to lay down their gift upon the raised platform near the Communion table. Not one person will attend the service without giving a gift.

Now people have Christmas dinners after the service, preparing tables out in front of their home and inviting many of their intimate friends to share.

Christmas in South Africa is a summer holiday. In December, the southern summer brings glorious days of sunshine that carry an irresistible invitation to the beaches, the rivers, and the shaded mountain slopes. Then the South African holiday season reaches its height. Schools are closed, and camping is the order of the day. In South Africa there is no snow, but it has many flowers, many beautiful varieties of cultivated and wild flowers being in their full pride.

In the cities and towns carolers make their rounds on Christmas Eve. Church services are held on Christmas morning. Christmas Eve celebrations in larger centers include "Carols by Candlelight" and special screen and floor shows.

Homes are decorated with pine branches, and all have the decorated Christmas fir in a corner, with presents for the children around. At bedtime on Christmas Eve, children may also hang up their stockings for presents from Father Christ-

mas.

Many South Africans have a Christmas dinner in the open-air lunch. For many more, it is the traditional dinner of either turkey, roast beef, mince pies, or suckling pig, yellow rice with raisins, vegetables, and plum pudding, crackers, paper hats, and all. In the afternoon, families go out into the country and usually there are games or bathing in the warm sunshine, and then home in the cool of the evening. Boxing Day is also a proclaimed public holiday usually spent in the open air. It falls on December 26 and is a day of real relaxation.

In Ghana, on Africa's west coast, most churches herald the coming of Christmas by decorating the church and homes beginning with the first week in Advent, four weeks before Christmas. This season happens to coincide with the cocoa harvest, so it is a time of wealth. Everyone returns home from wherever they might be such as farms or mines.

On the eve of Christmas, children march up and down the streets singing Christmas Carols and shouting "Christ is coming, Christ is coming! He is near!" in their language. In the evening, people flock to churches which have been decorated with Christmas evergreens or palm trees massed with candles. Hymns are sung and Nativity plays are presented.

On Christmas Day, children and older people, representing the angels in the fields outside Bethlehem, go from house to house singing. Another church service is held where they dress in their native attire or Western costumes. Later on there is a feast of rice and yam paste called **fufu** with stew or okra soup, porridge and meats. Families eat together or with close neighbors, and presents are given.

On the west coast of Africa, in Liberia, most homes have an oil palm for a Christmas tree, which is decorated with bells. On Christmas morning, people are woken up by carols. Presents such as cotton cloth, soap, sweets, pencils, and books are exchanged. Also in the morning a church service is held in which the Christmas scene is enacted and hymns and carols are sung. Dinner is eaten outdoors with everyone sitting in a circle to share the meal of rice, beef and biscuits. Games are played in the afternoon, and at night fireworks light up the sky.♦